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SEVERE CYCLONIC STORM MONTHA MAKES LANDFALL OFF ANDHRA COAST

The landfall process, which began off the Kakinada coast around 7 pm on Tuesday, crossing with wind speed of 90-100 kmph and gusting up to 110 kmph

STANDING CROPS ON 38,000 HECTARES HIT IN AP

Under the influence of the severe cyclonic storm, Nellore district in Andhra recorded the highest amount of rainfall on Tuesday. Standing crops spread over 38,000 hectares and horticulture crops in 1.38 lakh hectares were destroyed in the state, said a press release from the Andhra CM's office. A woman died in Konaseema district after an uprooted tree fell on her

LIFE OUT OF GEAR IN 15 DISTRICTS IN ODISHA

- The AP government has set up 488 control rooms at the mandal level. Nearly 76,000 people have been shifted to relief camps, and 219 medical camps have been set up at various locations
- Normal life was affected in 15 districts of neighbouring Odisha too with heavy rains causing landslides, damaging houses | P9

MONTHA

THAILAND GAVE THE NAME, WHICH MEANS 'FRAGRANT FLOWER' IN THAI LANGUAGE

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Dharwad bench of HC stays govt order aimed at curbing RSS activities

MALLIKARJUN HIREMATH
@ Dharwad

IN a setback to the Siddaramaiah government, the Dharwad bench of the Karnataka High Court on Tuesday stayed the government order, restraining private organisations from holding events on government-owned places. The government order, which is seen as aimed at the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, was passed after RDPR Minister Priyank Kharge wrote to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to curb RSS activities in the state. The order was challenged in the high court by NGO Punaschetana Seva Sangh, VK Foundation, Rajiv Malhar Kulkarni and Uma Chavan.

Justice M Nagaprasanna issued the stay on the government order. The petitioners argued that the government order, which restricted events, gatherings and others, is unconstitutional.

Legal sources too said the government order is against Article 19(1) A B of the Constitution. "With the GO, the government seems to be snatching the provision provided in the Constitution. The court has also said the government can submit the letter before the next hearing on November 17. If the government submits the letter seeking to vacate the stay, it might be considered," they added.

Setback for govt: BYV

The interim stay granted by the Dharwad bench of Karnataka High Court to the government order, restraining private organisations from holding events on government-owned places, is a setback to the state government, BJP state president BY Vijayendra said on Tuesday. At least now, the government should stop its futile attempts to suppress democracy to cover up its failures, he said.

He said the state government's move is aimed at suppressing the activities of RSS. He accused Congress of disrespecting the Constitution and showing authoritarian tendencies. "People have lost faith in the Congress government and political uncertainty has hit the state administration. The government is not in a position even to help farmers who are in distress," he alleged.

Chief whip of Opposition in the Council N Ravi Kumar said the judiciary has delivered a resounding slap on the Congress government. The government's move is politically-motivated, he added.

State govt to appeal against HC order: CM

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has said that his government will appeal against the Karnataka High Court's interim stay on the government's decision restraining private organisations from holding events on government-owned places. Speaking to reporters on Tuesday, Siddaramaiah said that he has directed the authorities concerned to appeal in the higher court against the order.

8th Pay Commission announced

Cabinet clears panel's terms of reference; revised salaries, pensions likely wef Jan 1, 2026

MUKESH RANJAN @ New Delhi

IN a big boost to around 48 lakh central government employees and 67 lakh pensioners, the Centre on Tuesday announced the long-awaited 8th Central Pay Commission and approved its terms of reference (ToR).

Briefing the media after a Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, information and broadcasting minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the panel, to be headed by former Supreme Court judge Ranjana Prakash Desai, has been given 18 months to submit its report.

The revised pay structure is expected to come into force on January 1, 2026. The commission will examine existing salary slabs, allowances, grade pay structures, pension formulae and other financial components that shape government compensation. The review is

expected to take into account macroeconomic realities, fiscal considerations and employment competitiveness.

"The 8th Central Pay Commission will be a temporary body. The Commission will comprise one Chairperson; One Member (Part Time) and one Member-Secretary," Vaishnaw said.

IIM Bangalore Professor Pulak Ghosh has been named as the member of the panel and Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas Secretary Pankaj Jain as the member-secretary.

The government had in principle decided to constitute the panel in January. Commenting on the delay in the rollout of the process, Vaishnaw said: "The Narendra Modi government has taken the decision in a record time, as it required wider consultations before finalising the ToR and the panel with a whole range of stakeholders, including large ministries like Defence, Home and Railways, as well as state governments and unions."

The pay commission recommendations are important as it will affect not just central government staff but also influence the compensation frameworks across state governments, public sector units, autonomous institutions and even private sector pay-benchmarking in some segments.

The announcement comes ahead of the Bihar elections, to be held on November 6 and 11.

Justice Ranjana Desai to head the commission

The panel's chair, former Supreme Court judge Ranjana Prakash Desai, is also the chairman of the Press Council of India. She has headed major panels, including Delimitation Commission for UT of J&K

'ToR cleared after consulting states'

Information and broadcasting minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the ToR of the panel was finalised after consultation with various ministries, state governments and staff side of joint consultative machinery

SJ-100

DEAL WITH RUSSIA TO MANUFACTURE PASSENGER JET

MAYANK SINGH @ New Delhi

IN a first of its kind deal for India, Russia moved beyond joint defence manufacture to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on building a twin-engine narrow-body passenger aircraft for short-haul flights in the country. The deal comes ahead of Russian President Vladimir Putin's scheduled visit to India and US squeeze to end the Ukraine war.

The MoU between Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and Russia's Public Joint Stock Company-United Aircraft Corporation (PJSC-UAC) for production of civil commuter aircraft Superjet (SJ)-100 was signed in Moscow on Monday.

The HAL called it the beginning of a new chapter in the history of the Indian aviation industry as, "The manufacturing of the SJ-100 aircraft will also be the first instance wherein a complete passenger aircraft will be produced in India."

The last such project was HAL's production of AVRO HS-748, which started in 1961 and ended in 1988.

As on date, more than 200 SJ-100s are under operation by more than 16 commercial airline operators. The aircraft can be a game changer for short-haul connectivity under the UDAN scheme in India. Under the agreement, HAL will have the rights to manufacture SJ-100s for domestic customers.

As per HAL's estimates, "over the next 10 years, the Indian aviation sector will require over 200 jets in this category for regional connectivity and an additional 350 aircraft for the Indian Ocean region to serve nearby international tourist destinations."

HAL saw it as a step towards fulfilling the dream of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' in the civil aviation sector. Manufacturing will also strengthen the private sector and create direct and indirect jobs in the aviation industry. HAL's Prabhat Ranjan and PJSC-UAC's Oleg Bogomolov signed the MoU. SJ-100's maiden flight was in 2008.

Mehli Mistry voted out of Tata Trusts

BENN KOCHUVEEDAN @ Mumbai

IN a dramatic shake-up within Tata Trusts, Mehli Mistry—once known as Ratan Tata's closest confidant—has been voted out of the board, marking an abrupt end to his rapid rise in the $180-billion Tata conglomerate's power structure.

A majority of trustees on Tuesday voted against Mistry's reappointment, ending his first three-year term as trustee of the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust and the Sir Ratan Tata Trust. Together, these two cornerstone entities hold 52% of Tata Sons, the holding company of the Tata Group.

Mehli Mistry

Mistry, handpicked by Ratan Tata in October 2022, was a contender for a future seat on the Tata Sons board. His unceremonious exit signals a clear consolidation of control by Noel Tata, who now firmly asserts himself as the chairman of all Tata Trusts that owns 66.6% of Tata Sons.

Sources said a bloc led by Noel, Venu Srinivasan and Vijay Singh, along with another unidentified trustee, voted against Mistry's continuation.

This follows the September 11 episode when trustees led by Mistry voted to oust Srinivasan and Singh from Tata Sons.

For Noel, his authority over the dozen-odd Trusts is now undisputed, but he faces a likely legal challenge from Mistry.

Miffed Rahul skips event

Though the Oppn tried to showcase unity during the manifesto's release, the absence of Congress' Rahul Gandhi told a different story. Rahul was miffed that RJD boss Lalu Yadav declined to meet Cong leaders K C Venugopal, Ashok Gehlot and Ajay Maken on Saturday to discuss joint campaign and other issues, said sources

EXPRESS READ

Indian national stabs 2 teens on US-Germany flight

New York: A 28-year-old Indian national allegedly stabbed two 17-year-old male passengers with a metal fork and slapped a female co-passenger on board a Chicago to Germany flight. The incident occurred on Saturday on a Lufthansa flight that had to be diverted to Boston Logan International Airport. Accused Praneeth Kumar Usiripalli was arrested after the incident.

GBA's economic agency to cater to IT sector

AKNISREE KARTHIK @Bengaluru

THE needling seems to have hit the spot. After widespread criticism of Bengaluru's infrastructure by the IT sector, especially the poor condition of Outer Ring Road and areas housing tech firms, the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) is soon setting up an 'Economic Development Agency'.

The agency will look after the interests of not only the existing IT sector and industries, but also ensure that infrastructure is at a level that will attract more companies to come to the city, invest and provide employment. It will also rope in representatives from the industry as its members for better coordination and effective functioning.

The agency will be similar to the Bengaluru Smart Infrastructure Ltd (BSMILE) and Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Ltd (BSWML), which have been assigned specific tasks and they focus only on that. A source close to the development said the agency will more or less act as a bridge between the IT sector and government.

Bengaluru's poor infrastructure – pothole-ridden roads, dust and infamous traffic, especially on the Outer Ring Road, frequented by IT workers – had become a hot topic of discussion across the country. The Congress-led state government came under attack for not attending to the complaints.

The Greater Bengaluru Governance Act, 2024, has a provision to set up an Economic Development Agency for Bengaluru. "The authority, within a year of its constitution, shall establish an Economic Development Agency. It will be headed by the Minister for Bengaluru Development as its chairperson. GBA has the power to appoint other members by specifying regulations," stated the GBA Act.

It is said that work is on to define the powers, functions and duties of the agency. "Its major task is to attract investments and generate employment in the GBA jurisdiction by building suitable public and private partnership projects," the source said.

GBA Chief Commissioner M Maheshwar Rao was not available for comment.

Tejashwi stamp on Oppn's manifesto

RAMASHANKAR AND PREETHA NAIR @ Patna/ New Delhi

THE Opposition INDIA bloc on Tuesday released its joint manifesto that had a large photograph of chief ministerial candidate and Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Tejashwi Prasad Yadav on its cover, and spoke of his vows for total transformation, ahead of the upcoming Bihar assembly election. It dwarfed Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's thumbnail image on the top-left corner of cover page.

The manifesto pledged to enact a law within 20 days of forming the new government to ensure one government job per family. The process of job distribution would begin within 20 months of assuming power, it assured.

It said Jeevika Didis would be granted permanent status as government employees with a monthly salary of ₹30,000; all contractual and outsourced workers would be made permanent; and the old pension scheme would be restored.

DECODE BIHAR POLL DECIDE

The manifesto also pledged to resist any "unconstitutional law" imposed by the Centre and to protect the constitutional rights of all minority communities.

The grand alliance promised that the Waqf Amendment Act would be put on hold and the management of Waqf properties will be made more welfare-oriented and beneficial by making them transparent, while the management of Buddhist temples in Bodh Gaya will be handed over to the people of the Buddhist community.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's no-show at the event became a talking point. He apparently was cross because RJD boss Lalu Yadav declined to meet a party delegation, saying it could be done only after the Chhath festival.

Rahul was also upset about the allies are fighting against each other in at least 11 seats. These 'friendly fights' indicate the failure to arrive at a consensus despite several rounds of talks.

Rahul will begin campaigning from Wednesday.

INDIA IN CROSS-HAIRS

Inside the Centre's huddle on information warfare

SUMIT KUMAR SINGH @ New Delhi

BEHIND closed doors at Sushma Swaraj Bhawan last week, some of the country's top bureaucrats gathered for what insiders described as a "crucial and unusually candid" discussion. The task before them: to draw up a coordinated strategy against 'misinformation'—the new battlefield where foreign entities are said to be targeting India.

The day-long meeting on October 25 brought together all Union government secretaries. It was chaired by the Prime Minister's Principal Secretaries, P K Mishra and Shaktikanta Das, along with Cabinet Secretary T V Somanathan and Information and Broadcasting Secretary Sanjay Jaju. The objective, according to officials, was to ensure that every ministry speaks in one voice and that communication reflects what they called a "whole-of-government and whole-of-society" approach.

A messaging rethink

Sources said the meeting was part of a wider effort to align the government's communication with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of "Reform, Perform, Transform and Inform." Somanathan, they added, called this the "guiding principle" in the thrust towards a Viksit Bharat — a developed India.

Beneath the polished phrasing, however, was a clear sense of concern. Officials acknowledged that 'misinformation' campaigns — especially those believed to be orchestrated by foreign actors — are becoming more sophisticated and targeted. One example was of Operation Sindoor, cited as an instance of coordinated information warfare aimed at undermining India's image abroad.

From coordination to credibility

The first part of the meeting dealt with tightening coordination among ministries to ensure a swift and unified response to false or misleading narratives. The second explored new digital tools and emerging technologies that could help the government tell its story better — and more directly to citizens.

Officials stressed the importance of simplicity and authenticity in communication. "Policies must be explained in the language people understand," one participant said. "It's not just about visibility anymore — it's about trust."

Reducing the middlemen

The meet also turned inward, examining how the government itself handles outreach. Participants discussed cutting down on the use of private agencies for official publicity. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, they suggested, should take the lead in crafting and disseminating communication material across platforms. The underlying message, one senior official summed up, was that the age of one-way communication is over. "Public messaging has to be credible, consistent and connected," he said. "That's the only way to win the information war."